



SCHOOL FINANCE PARTNERSHIP

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Denver, CO – Chris Watney, Co-Chair of the School Finance Partnership, issued the following statement at today’s Partnership meeting.

“I’d like to begin today’s meeting by acknowledging the significant decision that came down last Friday, when Denver District Judge Rappaport ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in the Lobato school funding case. Obviously, the Lobato ruling highlights what we already know – that Colorado’s system of funding schools is broken, and we have a great deal of work ahead of us to improve it.

“Today, as we had scheduled several months ago, we will be hearing from Kathy Gebhardt, as well as Tracie Rainey and Justin Silverstein, about the issues of adequacy and equity in school finance. These speakers have all been involved in the lawsuit in some capacity, and Kathy is one of the lead attorneys for the plaintiffs. In light of last week’s decision, we know these presentations are timely and will be of special interest.

“Before we get started with our agenda, I thought it would be helpful to remind all of us that this is a convening of the full School Finance Partnership. This group is intentionally structured in a way that facilitates learning, open discussion and debate. There are representatives here from a large and diverse group of organizations and, while we may approach the goal from many perspectives, we all have the common goal of improving how Colorado funds its schools. Just as we have done after previous Partnership meetings, members of the Steering Committee will use today’s discussion to inform their decision making and the recommendations that are made during their final meeting in January. As always, we expect lively discussion today that is respectful and productive.

“As you all know, while the decision in Lobato is an important one in the matter of school financing, the courts are not going to hand down a solution to the problem. The recommendations that are the result of our work have the potential to be a critical tool in improving how Colorado finances education. By taking a consensus approach and representing a wide range of viewpoints, this group has the potential to propose modern, meaningful and lasting recommendations that will strengthen the public education Colorado offers all of its children.”

The School Finance Partnership (SFP) is a broad coalition of community leaders, elected officials, education experts and advocates, and business leaders from diverse backgrounds and regions of the state working to find equitable, innovative, bi-partisan solutions to funding Colorado’s public schools that are aligned with goals for student achievement. The SFP was convened by the Colorado Children’s Campaign and is co-chair by Bob Deibel, Cary Kennedy and Chris Watney. The Partnership is working together to dramatically improve student outcomes – and Colorado as a whole – by addressing structural problems with Colorado school funding. For more information, please visit www.schoolfinancepartnership.org